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People Grow Things Here!

Kenny C. Guinn, Governor

Don Henderson, Director

**Activities and Achievements Report
April 2004**

The following provides a brief summary of activities conducted by the Nevada Department of Agriculture. It is not a complete listing of all Department activities, but rather highlights some of the more significant accomplishments. If you have questions concerning these or other Department activities, please feel free to contact the respective Division Administrator or Don Henderson. Also, if you desire to receive this monthly report by e-mail, please send your name, e-mail address, and an indication of this preference to crose@agri.state.nv.us.



ADMINISTRATION:

China Delegates Visit with Department Staff. Seventeen delegates from Qinghai Province in China met with Department staff for a day to learn about livestock production and regulation in Nevada. Presentations were provided by George Dorsa on livestock identification, Don Henderson on public land grazing, and Drs. David Thain and Anette Rink on animal health issues. A second Chinese delegation mission is expected later this summer.

Department and Nevada Highway Patrol Discuss Agricultural Exemption. Don Henderson met with Major Bob Wideman, Nevada Highway Patrol (NHP) Northern Command, to discuss implementing an agricultural exemption from motor carrier regulations as authorized by the 1995 National Highway System Designation Act (P.L. 104-59). This Act provides for an exemption to maximum driving and on-duty time for drivers hauling agricultural products or supplies within a 100-mile radius of their source. The Department will develop regulations designating a year-round planting and harvesting season in Nevada. NHP will then implement the exemption.

Employee of the Quarter: Shirlene Wayland, Agriculturist III, has been selected as the recipient of the Department's outstanding employee recognition award. This is an award that is offered on a quarterly basis to Department employees. Shirlene, an entomologist, is a 30 plus year employee of the Department and works in the Las Vegas office where she oversees the registration and licensing of Pest Control Operators. This is a program that has seen rapid growth over the past several years. Today, there are over 1,200 pest control operators licensed with the Department. One of Shirlene's major accomplishments during her career has been the computerization on a searchable database of all pest control operators dating back to the 1970's. Congratulations Shirlene! Thank you for all your contributions to the Department over your long and productive career.

Mormon Cricket Update At Eureka Hay/Forage Meeting. Don Henderson attended a hay and forage update held in Eureka where he provided a report on cricket control efforts for the State Entomologist, Jeff Knight.



AGRICULTURAL ENFORCEMENT:

Enforcement Statistics for March, 2004. March enforcement statistics included:

- 252 commercial vehicle stops for inspection
- 21 warning citations issued
- 6 court citations issued
- 17 verbal warnings
- 22 check-site attendances
- 19 strays were returned
- 33 stolen cattle were recovered.



ANIMAL HEALTH:

Biotechnology Lecture. On April 14th, Dr. Rink gave a lecture on Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (mad cow disease) to the biochemistry freshmen class at University Nevada Reno. This guest lecture was given as part of the Biotechnology course in which different speakers discuss ‘real world’ applications of biotechnology.

California and National Tuberculosis Epidemiology Conference. Drs. Forbes and Rink attended the California and National Tuberculosis Epidemiology Update Conference in Sacramento, California, on April 28th and 29th. Bovine Tuberculosis has been detected in Arizona, California, New Mexico, Texas and Michigan. The Animal Disease Laboratory is seeking certification as the Western Region Bovine Gamma Interferon Laboratory. The bovine gamma interferon test is an in vitro test which measures the cellular immune response of cattle against mycobacterial antigens and can be used either in lieu of or in conjunction with the comparative cervical test to diagnose bovine tuberculosis in cattle. A caudal fold test always precedes both procedures.

Department’s Dog Safety Video Receives National Recognition. Dr. Anderson was informed that the Department’s dog safety video “BOWWOW OW!” was a Telly Award Finalist (the non-broadcast equivalent of an “Emmy”). The production was judged on its own merits of excellence by the panel of experts and was rated in the top 18% of the 10,000 entries received, which earned it a bronze Telly statue. Entries are received from all 50 states and five continents and is a widely known and highly respected national and international competition. There have been 100 copies purchased by the Humane Society of the United States.

Homeland Security Grant Project for Animal Mobile Disaster Shelters. Dr. Ron Anderson and Roger Van Oordt, City of Las Vegas Senior Animal Control officer, attended the City of Las Vegas FY-04 Homeland Security Grant Project Proposals meeting. The purpose was to support the purchase of two customized mobile animal shelters for regional deployment. The units will be used to provide medical care and sheltering of pets and other animals during and after a natural disaster or terrorist incident involving animals.

National Animal Identification Plan. Dr. David Thain met with a working group at the Nevada Dairy Commission exploring a pilot project to meet the national animal identification plan.

National Johnes Working Group Meeting. Drs. David Thain and Keith Forbes attended the National Johnes Working Group meeting and the annual National Institute of Animal Agriculture (NIAA) meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah. Johnes disease is a debilitating disease of cattle and may lead to significant economic loss in both dairy and beef operations. Nevada Department of Agriculture currently has a USDA Veterinary Services grant to develop a Johnes disease control program in Nevada.

Review of New Poultry Slaughtering Facility. Dr. Ron Anderson and Tom Smigel met with the owner of a market in Las Vegas to view a proposed poultry slaughtering facility in the loading dock area. This market plans to offer freshly killed chickens. Dr. Anderson informed the store manager that the Division of Animal Industry can help the store operation maintain the highest public health standards. When the operation begins butchering and processing chickens, another visit from Animal Industry will be required.

Welcome Aboard New Microbiologists. The Animal Disease Laboratory (ADL) hired Kimberly Priest as Microbiologist / Molecular Biologist II. Kim graduated in 2002 with a Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry from University of Nevada Reno. Since her graduation she has been working on a cattle genotyping project in University of Nevada Reno's College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources. In the ADL Kim will be primarily in charge of Ribonucleic Acid and Deoxyribonucleic Acid based diagnostics, specifically detection of West Nile Virus, Western Equine Encephalitis Virus, Eastern Equine Encephalitis Virus, highly pathogenic avian influenza virus and Exotic New Castle Disease Virus using quantitative reverse transcriptive polymerase chain reaction.



EDUCATION:

Capitol City Farm Days Festival Displays. Jennifer Bartlett hosted a display for the Nevada Rangeland Resources Commission at the Capitol City Farm Days Festival. Jennifer introduced hundreds of elementary-aged students to the benefits of livestock grazing on the public lands. Commission Chairman, Deloyd Satterthwaite, also attended this festival for a short period of time. Wildlife Specialist Cody Stemler also attended the Farm Days Festival. Cody hosted a booth for Animal Damage Control which included various teaching aides (animal pictures, hides and skulls) for the youngsters to look at during the all day festival. Teachers were also in attendance with the young students.

Clark County Fair Booth. Don Henderson visited the Nevada Department of Agriculture booth in Logandale (Clark County) held April 8-11. The booth was a great success with the following displays:

- Desert brown & black widow spiders
- Bark & desert scorpions
- Africanized & European Honeybees
- Elm tree beetles
- Air filter that honey bees made a honeycomb in from the Ethel M factory
- Weights & Measures Division's weights
- Survey for Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Programs

School Presentations on Pest Control and Africanized Honeybees. Scott Cichowlaz gave a presentation on "Pest Control in the School Environment: an Integrated Pest Management Approach" and Marv Berson gave a presentation on the control of Africanized honeybees at the Clark County School District's Staff Development Day for Custodians and Grounds Maintenance personnel. Over 110 individuals attended the programs.



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION:

Restoration of Natural Habitat Presentation. Tom Smigel attended a workshop on "Effectiveness Monitoring and Adaptive Management" on April 14-15, 2004. This workshop was followed by a field trip to the US Fish and Wildlife Refuge at Ash Meadows, where the natural springs were restored to convert them back from agricultural use to a more natural state. The exercise was to understand and apply a monitoring program to such an ecosystem in order to determine if the actions were benefiting the species of concern. This knowledge will then be used to evaluate the success of resource management actions which have been taken under the Clark County Desert Conservation Plan.



HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Public Health Fair on West Nile Virus, Rabies, Exotic Newcastle Disease. Tom Smigel assisted Keith Forbes, Veterinarian, set up and man a Department booth at the Nevada Public Health Fair on Saturday, April 3. The topics of public health concern presented by Dr. Forbes were West Nile Virus and rabies. Information on Exotic Newcastle Disease and a pamphlet on the services that the Department provides were also available. More than a thousand people attended.

West Nile Virus Sampling/Survey. On April 26, Tom Smigel attended a West Nile Virus survey planning meeting at the Clark County District Health Department (CCDHD). Samples will be sent to the Nevada Department of Agriculture Animal Disease Lab. Sentinel chicken flocks will be established in Clark County. Blood samples will be collected from these flocks every two weeks beginning May 10th. The Las Vegas office will keep track of calls concerning dead birds and provide this information to Dr. Rink.



LIVESTOCK IDENTIFICATION:

Livestock Theft Investigation. Investigator, Chris Collis and Agriculture Enforcement Officer, Dennis Journigan, with the cooperation of the Arizona Brand Department and the Mohave County, Arizona, Sheriff's Department broke a case of cattle stolen out of Churchill County, Nevada. The cattle were stolen, transported, re-branded and housed in Beaver Dam, Arizona, awaiting transportation and sale to Idaho. Two suspects were arrested and a truck and trailer were seized on warrants stemming from the Nevada investigation. Thirty-three cattle were recovered, and the Churchill County District Attorney, in cooperation with the Agriculture Enforcement staff, has issued warrants for three more people and vehicles suspected as having a part in this and possibly other cases of stolen cattle in Nevada.

Moving Cattle on State Highways Issue. Administrator, Jim Connelley, attended a meeting on Nevada Open Range law. Assemblyman Carpenter chaired the meeting. Assemblyman Goicoechea, Nevada Highway Patrol Supervisory officers, Department of Transportation personnel, Elko county commissioners, and ranchers also attended. The safety of the motoring public, and the ability of ranchers to move their cattle along the highways and Rights-of-way.

Other Activities.

- ✓ Administrator, Jim Connelley, helped man a booth at the Clark County Fair in Logandale.
- ✓ Jim Connelley attended a meeting of the subcommittee on agriculture of the Nevada Homeland Security Commission.



DIVISION OF MEASUREMENT STANDARDS:

Bureau of Fuels Technology Staff Member Elected to Truckee Meadows Clean Cities Coalition. Vernon Miller was elected as Vice President of Truckee Meadows Clean Cities Coalition. The Coalition will host an alternative fuel symposium to encourage alternative fuel use.

News Channel 8 Records Division's Gasoline Process. News Channel 8 in Las Vegas recorded a news article about the Division's gasoline process; including fuel sampling, fuel analysis, and volumetric testing that aired the second week of May as part of "sweeps week".

Petroleum Lab Groundbreaking Set for June. The Petroleum Lab is moving along on-time with construction as documents are nearly complete. The project will go to bid the first part of June with groundbreaking in June. Asbestos abatement in the current building begins in May.

Propane Problems. The Las Vegas propane prover developed some problems and after diagnosis it was determined the pump is failing and must be replaced. This added to several other unanticipated repairs throughout the year.

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT:

Grazing Issue Resolution. Gary McCuin participated and assisted in a local effort to resolve grazing issues between the U.S. Forest Service and a Jiggs area rancher. These successful discussions led to an agreement that is currently in the process of being implemented. Additionally, Gary has been busy conducting a Section 8 review on a grazing permit located in northwestern Nevada and leading an interagency effort to update the 1984 Nevada Rangeland Monitoring Handbook.



PLANT INDUSTRY:

Africanized Honeybees. Numerous calls came into the Las Vegas office on honeybee swarms and associated problems. Control information was provided and samples were accepted for identification.

Surprisingly, there is a renewed interest in beekeeping in southern Nevada and there is a movement to organize a honey co-op. The University of Nevada Las Vegas has secured a grant monies which will provide funding to construct a honey processing facility on land owned by the University. The plan calls for this facility to be used and maintained by the co-op members.

Department Finalizes Compliance Agreement with Geenline Foods. On April 21, a compliance agreement was signed between the Department and Greenline Foods to process raw green beans. The agreement lets Greenline ship raw green beans into Nevada from areas known to be infested with European corn borer, process them for the fresh market in Las Vegas, and dispose of the waste products in a manner that prohibits the introduction of the pest into the State of Nevada. Nevada is free of this European corn borer and has a quarantine against its introduction.

Gopher Bait Removed From Sale. During a routine inspection of a plant nursery in Boulder City on April 16, 2004, Marvin Berson had cause for the removal of nine-3 pound containers of gopher bait from sale at a hardware store. New requirements have classified all products containing strychnine as State Restricted Use Pesticides (RUP's). The manager declined to register as a dealer of RUP's and instead decided to return the product to his supplier.

Nursery Program Statistics Summary for March/April 2004.

Total number of establishments inspected by Agriculturists: 193

Nurseries (wholesale and retail):	41
Landscapers (job sites or records audits):	5
Shipments inspected at their Nevada destination:	99
Shipments intercepted prior to delivery:	39
Inspections done to issue Inspection Certificates for shipment of nursery stock out of state:	9

Sudden Oak Death related inspections conducted in March: 11

(each establishment with suspect plants also required
at least one follow-up inspection)

Total establishments contacted for trace forwards:	11
# of establishments with suspect plants on sale:	7
# of establishments with no suspect plants on sale:	4
# of Stop Sales issued:	7
# of plants placed on hold for sampling results:	98

Number of Enforcement Actions by Agriculturists: 18

Notice of Violation	8
Citations	6
Stock held for pest identifications	4

Samples submitted to Entomology/Pathology labs: 11

Pest Control Inspections / Audits. Las Vegas pest control staff (Scott Cichowlaz, Shirlene Wayland, and Greg Hymas) spent most of the month conducting routine pest control operator use inspections and pest control record audits. Shirlene issued 20 inspection letters to pest control operators for the next round of inspections.

Pest Control Licensing & Enforcement Program Statistics.

Type of Violation	Fine
Conducting business while on suspension & using unlicensed operators	\$500.00
Unlicensed pest control category	\$500.00
Unlicensed applicators & violation of cease/desist order	\$650.00
Subsequent offense for using unlicensed operators	\$1,000.00

Note: Fines go to the respective school district where offense occurs.

Phytosanitary School. On April 26, Marc Olson, Marv Berson, and Ruth Tietjen traveled to St. George, Utah, to participate in a Phytosanitary School conducted by the US Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service agents. Basically, this is a comprehensive course designed to train on the inspection, certification, and documentation of plants and plant products to be exported. Upon completion of the course and passing a test, those individuals are certified to issue export certificates.

Sudden Oak Death Update. Sudden oak death (SOD), a fungus-like plant disease caused by *Phytophthora ramorum*, was discovered in California in 1995 resulting in the implementation of a federal quarantine of 12 California counties and one county in Oregon. In March of 2002 two wholesale nurseries in southern California outside of the quarantined counties tested positive for SOD. Host plants from both nurseries had been shipped nationwide.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) requested the Department's assistance in tracing nursery stock that was shipped to Nevada from the two nurseries. Department staff responded by placing 168 plants on hold at seven different locations. There were 70 samples taken and tested by Department Plant Pathologist Dr. Shouhua Wang. All samples were negative and the plants were released.

In an attempt to confine the disease, USDA has quarantined all California nurseries that ship host or associated host plants interstate. Such plants cannot be shipped until the nursery has been inspected, sampled, and has tested negative for the disease.

Warning Citations for Non-compliance to Pest Control Operators Regulations. Xenia Duranovic issued three warning citations to local pest control operators for non-compliance to Pest Control Operator regulations during routine stops. Compliance was achieved within the time frame specified in the citation.



WATER:

Groundwater Activities for 2003. Jon Carpenter reports that in the year 2003, the Nevada Department of agriculture collected samples from 60 permanent shallow monitoring wells that are located in urban and agricultural areas throughout the state. The wells were sampled in the spring and fall of the year. A total of 120 water samples (not including quality assurance samples) were submitted to the Nevada Department of Agriculture pesticide lab in Reno.

Eight of the monitoring wells are consistently positive for at least one and as many as five different pesticide compounds. Pesticides detected include: diuron, atrazine, bromacil, metolachlor, bentazon, simazine, promaton, and hexazinone. All detections are below health advisory levels and none are from domestic or municipal water sources.

Source investigations have been completed for some of the contaminated wells and are currently underway for others. Some sources of contamination include: leaching of agricultural pesticides into shallow groundwater and application of pesticide near and directly over a monitoring well.

WEED MANAGEMENT:

Clark County Cooperative Weed Management Area Meeting. Tom Smigel attended the meeting with Tina Kadrmas, the new weed CWMA coordinator from the Reno office. This group is very busy with ideas and projects. One project that is being planned is the conversion of a large wash area (Pittman Wash) in Henderson, Nevada, from a tangle of native plants and noxious weeds to a natural area free of the invasive weeds. It is hoped that the conversion will be done through community involvement, and that these projects will become popular throughout Clark County.

Growth & Increased Activities Proportional to Weed Spread. Dawn Rafferty participated in a panel discussion regarding recreation on public lands at the Resource Advisory Council meeting at The Nugget. The panel explored the effects of Nevada's rapid growth on public lands used for recreation. Included was increased spread of noxious weeds.

Noxious Weed Presentation. Dawn Rafferty gave a presentation on noxious weeds at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) All Employee's Day at the state Bureau of Land Management office in Reno. The presentation was well received and may have encouraged many new folks to take an interest in the weed issue!

Thistle Pull. Tina Kadrmas and Dawn Rafferty participated in a thistle pull at Mayberry Park in Reno. The pull was organized by the Truckee River Cooperative Weed Management Area and was attended by over 25 people. Over fifteen trash bags of musk and scotch thistle were dug and removed from the park; this was a great benefit to the members of the public who use this park.

Weed Removal Discussed at the Nevada Division of Forestry's Annual Stewardship Meeting. Terry Dunfield and Dawn Rafferty attended the Nevada Division of Forestry's (NDF) Annual Stewardship meeting in Carson City at the NDF office. Dawn discussed removal of tamarisk (athel) from NDF's available plant list as well as the concerns over Russian Olive. Although Russian Olive is not currently on the state's noxious weed list, it is exhibiting some very invasive characteristics when planted in certain areas. NDF has agreed to notify those who purchase Russian Olive of these potential problems.



WILDLIFE SERVICES:

Canadian Geese Contaminate Lake Tahoe. On April 21st, State Director Robert Beach and District Supervisor Jack Spencer Jr. met with Lake Tahoe Directors regarding management of resident Canada geese. The main concerns Lake Tahoe cooperators have with the urban geese are human health and safety issues and Lake Tahoe water contamination from goose fecal matter. The Lake Tahoe cooperators have agreed to fund a Wildlife Biologist on the Nevada side of the lake in the spring of 2005. Approximately eight people were in attendance including two California District Supervisors.

Employee Recognition for Staff Assisting Centers for Disease Control. District Supervisor Jack Spencer Jr. presented certificates to Dallas Rowley, Mike Smith, Tom Kilby, Ben Miller, Frank Homan, Don Capelli, and John Peter who assisted the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) with collection blood samples from predators that are removed during wildlife damage management work. The samples are sent to the CDC for plague testing. If plague is detected, local health officials are notified where plague is found. The Washoe County Vector Control Services maps out the locations in Nevada. USDA/ Wildlife Services-Nevada sends more samples to CDC than any other program in the Nation.

Mule Deer Protection. During April, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Ben Miller continued protecting juvenile mule deer on the Schell Creek Range (hunt unit 222), including the removal of five coyotes from the area. WS Miller reports that mule deer have stayed in the low country, taking advantage of the recent growth in grass.

Statistics

Report for Nevada State Agriculture (Quarterly) Jan. - Feb. - Mar. 2004				
	January	February	March	Total
New Projects	32	16	23	71
Ongoing Projects	96	88	105	289
Agreement Acres	9.64 million	9.9 million	10.8 million	30.34 million
No. provided with Technical Aassist.	87	152	187	426
No. of Blood Samples Collected	24	113	97	234
Disease Tested For:				
Plague	21	76	80	177
West Nile	3	37	17	57
Wildlife Damage Reported:				
Reported incidents by cooperators:	109	98	73	280
Reported/Verified by WS/PARC:	119	191	130	440
Damage Value reported by cooperators in \$:	\$ 16,650	\$21,876	\$23,880	\$62,406
Damage Value reported by WS/PARC in \$:	\$14,348	\$47,905	\$10,800	\$73,053
Number of animals taken to prevent or resolve ongoing complaints:				
Coyote	637	621	789	2047
Raven	20	283	756	1059

Wildlife Staff Receive Recognition for Participation in 21st Vertebrate Pest Conference. Pete Coates, Mike Smith, Zack Bowers, and Jack Spencer were given certificates of recognition for their participation in the 21st Vertebrate Pest Conference held March 1-4, 2004, in Visalia, California.

- ✓ Pete Coates presented a paper on “Effects of Corvid Removal On Prairie Grouse Reproduction”
- ✓ Zack Bowers presented a paper, “Protecting Canada Geese On A Wildlife Management Area in East Central Nevada”
- ✓ Jack Spencer presented a paper, “Nevada Wildlife Resource Protection Overviews: 200-2003”
- ✓ Mike Smith delivered two papers, “Capturing Nuisance Urban Canada Geese in Reno, Nevada: Goose Round-ups Vs. Alpha-Chloralose” and “Capturing Nuisance Urban Canada Geese Using The Bird Immobilization Agent Alpha-Chloralose in Reno, Nevada: What We Learned”.

All of these papers were presented professionally and the program was well represented.